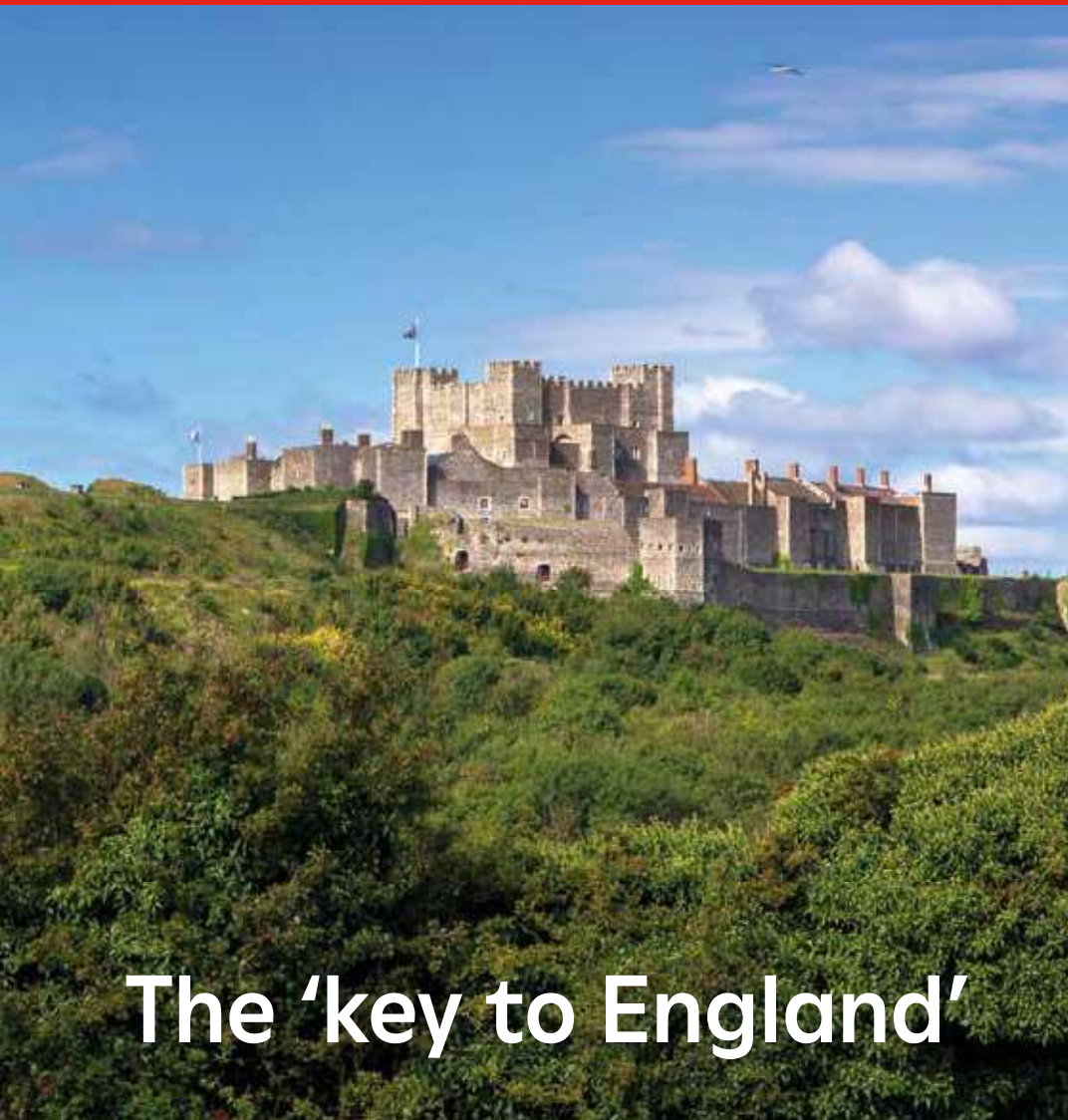


Attractions

Inspiring days out for groups



The 'key to England'

We're transforming part of Dover Castle to create an exciting new visitor experience. Your groups will soon be able to step back to a time when England very nearly became subject to the kingdom of France.

For several months in 1216 and again in 1217, Prince Louis 'the Lion' of France campaigned in England, including sieges at Dover Castle. He hoped that capturing the castle would help him to seize

the crown from King John. But the castle defenders steadfastly held out against the French. And by August 1217, Prince Louis' hopes of ruling England were finally dashed.

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Thank you for your support

We're looking forward to welcoming you and your groups to our sites.

Enjoy exploring them, knowing that your visits help keep the story of England alive for future generations.



Opening at Dover Castle this summer

Continued from page 1

We're preparing lots of new experiences at Dover Castle. Top of the list is a new visitor space that brings to life dramatic events from the castle's 13th-century past.

Alongside this, we're using set dressing and props to recreate aspects of a Georgian barracks. The scene will give your groups a snapshot of what a soldier's life might have been like at the castle around 1800.

Our new visitor space lifts the lid on a largely forgotten chapter in our history when Prince Louis and his English baronial allies controlled most of England. Dover Castle held out against him and its resolute defenders played a crucial part in preventing Prince Louis of France from becoming King Louis I of England.

Cover image: Dover Castle
Above: The 13th-century tunnels
Below: The King's Chamber
©Historic England

Your group members will find an absorbing story using graphics, films and a model to navigate the siege of 1216/17 and the evolution of the castle's defences.

The fight for the crown

Prince Louis had been offered the English crown by rebellious barons fighting King John. The Frenchman arrived in Kent with a large army in May 1216. King John fled, and the prince was proclaimed king in London's old St Paul's Cathedral. But not all the barons rebelled against King John. Hubert de Burgh, Constable of Dover, remained loyal to the king. He defended the fortress against French attack with the support of 140 knights and hundreds of soldiers. The garrison held fast.

In 1216 the main entrance to Dover Castle was a gatehouse at its northernmost point, protected by a 'barbican' outwork. Louis began the siege in earnest by capturing the barbican then undermining the gateway, but he was driven out with heavy losses and agreed a truce on 14 October after hearing about the death of King John.

No surrender

A jubilant Louis urged Dover's garrison to surrender. But Hubert refused, vowing to hold the castle for the king's heir, nine-year-old Henry III. Louis attacked again in May 1217 before abandoning the siege when his main army were decisively beaten at Lincoln. Following the siege, Hubert built a new barbican linked to the castle by a system of underground tunnels (pictured above).

We've carried out an extensive conservation project. And now we're creating hands-on experiences and exciting interpretation to reveal the dramatic story of how the castle, and country, came so close to defeat.

These major new additions promise to provide an unmissable and unforgettable new dimension to group days out – with the Secret Wartime Tunnels and King Henry II's Great Tower (pictured left) already firm favourites.

Saved from the skip

We're delighted to have part of a rare shell collection back in our care. It goes on display at Chesters Roman Fort, Hadrian's Wall this month.

The shells were originally part of a collection of 1,200 land and seashells from across the globe. The collection was amassed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by Bridget Clayton, the grandmother of John Clayton.

John was one of the most important figures in 19th-century archaeology and inherited Chesters Roman Fort in 1832. He spent 50 years excavating along Hadrian's Wall, uncovering significant Roman finds. Groups can see many of them in the fort's Clayton Museum, ranging from altars and religious artefacts to jewellery.

Bridget was fascinated by nature. She engaged others to collect on her behalf throughout the world. Her collection included shells found during Captain Cook's third voyage to New Zealand and the Hawaiian islands from 1776-80.

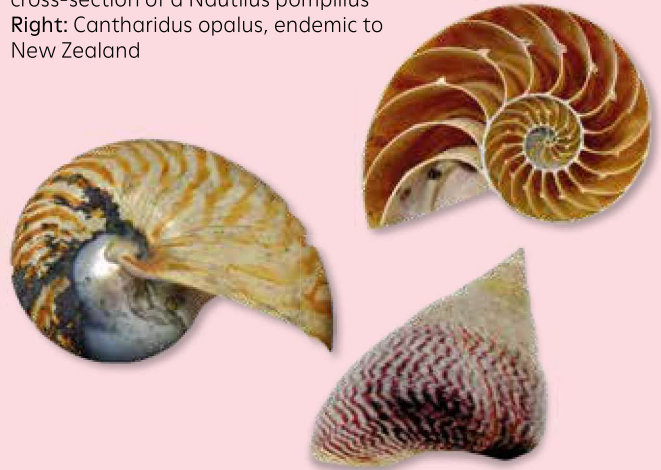
We thought that 200 of the shells, including some from Captain Cook's voyage, had been lost in the 1980s. We're delighted that they've been returned to us. They're now on display at Chesters until November. They include the now protected Giant Clam and others that are rare, unusual and beautiful.

Collections Curator Frances McIntosh takes up the story: 'Bridget's collection remained with the Clayton family until the estate was sold in 1930. In 1934, 200 shells were loaned to the zoology department of Armstrong College, now Newcastle University. They were thought to have been discarded in a skip in the 1980s. However, they had been rescued by a lecturer, and last year, were returned to join the Clayton Collection, just as Bridget intended.'

At Chesters, group members can also explore the ruins of a luxurious commandant's house and a spectacular Roman bathhouse.



Left: Chesters Roman Fort
Below left and top: internal and external cross-section of a Nautilus pompilius
Right: Cantharidus opalus, endemic to New Zealand



Make a day of it...

...by moving on to Corbridge Roman Town, just 15 minutes away. The museum in this once bustling town contains artefacts from the famous 1900-year-old Corbridge Hoard – the contents of a wooden chest discovered in 1964, which is a time capsule of daily life for a Roman soldier. Until July there's also an exhibition which delves into a mystery which has baffled archaeologists since the 18th century. They still don't know what the 120 dodecahedra found through the whole of the Roman Empire were used for. Although each is unique, they all have 12 sides and share other common features, including a hole on each face and knobs on the corners.



Above: The museum at Corbridge
Right: One of the dodecahedra



A colourful autumn blooms at Stonehenge

This autumn English Heritage will display over 5,000 blooms at Stonehenge. The floral attraction revives an annual dahlia show that first ran at Stonehenge in 1842. It promises to be a great day out for your groups.





Awards accolade for Stonehenge

Our brilliant team at Stonehenge are thrilled. The warm welcome they give our group visitors has helped put Stonehenge onto a shortlist of six for the Group Leisure & Travel magazine Best UK Attraction award 2024. Now its over to you to vote for us in round two of the magazine's poll which closes on April 21 - go to: www.groupleisureandtravel.com/awards/vote

The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony in June.

In early Victorian times Stonehenge was not the attraction it is today. But it did briefly become the backdrop to an annual flower show complete with band, cricket matches and picnicking. From 1842 to 1845 as many as 10,000 visitors came on a single day - not to see the Stones, but to satisfy a 19th-century passion for dahlias.

Dahlias first arrived in Britain in 1798. By 1842, they had become a national obsession. Botanists experimented to create dozens of different varieties and an endless selection of shapes and sizes.

This was the heyday of plant collecting. It was also a time when people loved to picnic, promenade and people-watch outside. As a result, the Victorians flocked to flower fetes to meander through marquees. Events like the Horticultural Society's grand fete at Chiswick in June 1827 and dahlia show at Surrey

Zoological Gardens in 1834, were hugely popular.

Salisbury Plain Dahlia Society was formed in 1838 to capitalise on this appetite for outdoor entertainments. Initially the society ran its show in the grounds of a local inn. An instant hit, attracting 1,000 visitors, it ran for four years before moving to Stonehenge. Stonehenge's landowner, Sir Edmund Antrobus, was a Fellow of the Horticultural Society of London. He saw the attraction of combining the dahlia exhibition with a cricket match on the nearby pitch.

In its first year and helped by fine weather, thousands of visitors came to enjoy a brass band, side-shows, a cricket match - which saw a Salisbury XI win by 47 runs - and of course to admire the blooms. A hundred and sixty people sat down to a formal dinner, while 'parties of gentlemen and elegantly dressed ladies' enjoyed a 'universal picnic.'

Prizes were given for a floral 'device' - sculptures made from dahlias supported by wire - as well as for the blooms themselves. Mr Whale, Head Gardener at Elcot Park in Berkshire, won a first prize for the 'Hero of Stonehenge', his dark mulberry-coloured dahlia.

The size of the crowds attending the Stonehenge dahlia shows between 1842 and 1845, were estimated at between 5,000 and 10,000 on each occasion - rapidly advancing the Stones' foothold in the public imagination. After the first, held five years before trains started bringing day trippers to Salisbury, it was reported that 'barely a conveyance remained in Salisbury by midday'.

With the popularity of Stonehenge on the rise, the obsession with dahlias was waning and evolving tastes saw the sculptural floral devices regarded as 'monstrosities' by mid-century. Interest in dahlias revived in the 1870s and enthusiasts formed the National Dahlia Society in 1881.

Reviving the Dahlia Show

For the first time last year we arranged a display of over 5,000 dahlias at Stonehenge to replicate these shows. Flower arranging clubs fashioned spectacular floral devices including dahlia head-dresses for visitors to wear to pose and parade underneath a dahlia trilithon.

We are running the event again in 2024 on September 27-29 when flowers grown by members of the National Dahlia Society will be displayed in traditional style and visitors will once again help us select the Hero of Stonehenge for 2024.

We'd be delighted to welcome your group to join us - so jump in your own 'conveyance' and come along for what promises to be another successful show.

Group visit information

There's free parking in a dedicated area for coaches and mini buses. You can collect pre-booked tickets from the group reception here. Plus, there's a dedicated stop for group members to hop on the shuttle service to the stone circle. The Dahlia Show is included in your ticket price.

Our visitor centre houses a world-class exhibition, shop, counter-service 'grab and go' café - and just outside, you can explore a reconstructed Neolithic village.

Award-winning artists bring site histories to life

Each year, we commission artists to create new works of art inspired by our sites and collections. These installations offer groups original, thought-provoking ways to interact with a site's story. We have two new projects for your group to experience.



Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens, Northumberland

On now until Sun 14 July

2022 Turner Prize nominee Ingrid Pollard MBE has created a series of interventions and installations at this Northumbrian site. *There is Light in the Fissures* explores Belsay's landscape and the layers of history it has witnessed and focuses on the sandstone from which the hall and quarry were made.

Your group members can find her work both inside and outside the hall. It ranges from intricately-designed paper fragments covering torn wallpaper in the hall's bedrooms, to mirrors hidden in the Quarry Garden. A huge stone segment found in Belsay's grounds dominates the entrance of the Greek revival hall. It hangs suspended and cradled by ropes from the hall's towering pillars.

Kenwood, Hampstead, London

Sat 29 June – Sun 3 November

This year marks 50 years since the Suffolk Collection – collected over a period of 400 years by generations of the earls of Suffolk and Berkshire – was gifted to the nation. Mostly featuring royal and family portraits spanning the 16th to 19th centuries, the jewels of this collection held at Kenwood are internationally important paintings by Jacobean portraitist William Larkin. In *Strike a Pose: Stephen Farthing and the Swagger Portrait*, this renowned painter and Royal Academician presents his contemporary reworking of paintings within the collection to mark this special anniversary. The exhibition includes *Richard Sackville, Earl of Dorset*, painted by Larkin in 1613 and *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow? (Sackville and Cary after Larkin)*, pictured below, one of Farthing's responses to the collection.

Admission to Kenwood with its superb Robert Adam interiors is free. There is also no charge to see Stephen Farthing's exhibition, the Suffolk Collection and the Iveagh Bequest featuring works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Van Dyck, Gainsborough and Reynolds. For a small charge, you can pre-book guided tours for your group.



Our Creative Programme

We launched our new Creative Programme in 2022 with projects including a major temporary installation by Morag Myerscough on Hadrian's Wall (pictured below) to mark its 1,900th anniversary. Senior Creative Programme Manager Penelope Sexton says: 'We encourage the artists that we work with to imaginatively engage with England's histories in new and exciting ways. I'm really excited for our visitors to see how this year's contemporary artists have drawn inspiration from the great sites and collections in our care.'





Treasures in store at Wrest Park

Our tour guides can transform a great day out into an unforgettable one. They can delve deeper into a site's story and add a fascinating extra dimension to visits.

At Wrest Park in Bedfordshire our expert volunteers offer unmissable tours of the archaeological store. It contains thousands of treasures, mostly discovered at our sites across much of middle England. Collections Manager Rachel Kitcherside gives us a whistlestop tour of what your group can expect:

'We have over 200,000 objects in store here. The oldest is a prehistoric flint axe head from Grimes Graves in Norfolk and we have a collection of painted glass from both Denny Abbey in Cambridgeshire and Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire, dating as far back as the 13th century.

Most of the objects are from archaeological excavations and as such, are large assemblages of pottery, stone, bone and tiles, as well as paper and other small finds. Objects do go back

out to sites for re-display – for example for an exhibition which opened at Wroxeter Roman City in Shropshire last year and another at Grimes Graves, due to open soon.

I feel privileged to work with such a wide range of objects spanning so much of our history. With our volunteer guides, we design and thoroughly research a new store tour each year and in 2024 the focus is on some of our more personal objects. These include a diary from Tilbury Fort, Essex and a cook book from Boscobel House in Shropshire – we will share some of the stories from them.

We'll also be going into more depth about how we care for the objects and tell tour members about our collection of London-based architectural

objects. Not necessarily from our sites, they include five 8ft high wooden bell jacks, which are unmissable. The statues came from Columbia Market, Bethnal Green, built by millionaire philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts, to provide fresh food for the poor. She inherited her wealth from her grandfather, banker Thomas Coutts and used it generously to help others. Opened in 1869, the building was demolished in 1958.'



Volunteer tour guide Paul Shorting with the bell jacks

Plan your visit

You can pre-book a tour of the archaeological store Tuesdays to Fridays from April – October. Groups must be fewer than 20 people, cost £5 per person and last around 45 minutes. You can split your larger groups into two tours at the same time if two guides are free on the day. The tours are popular, so book at least a month ahead. We can set up chairs at various

stopping points for group members with mobility issues. But we've limited space so only have room for just a few.

Your group can also enjoy pre-booked tours of Wrest Park's superb grounds or see hand-painted oriental wallpaper inside the French-style mansion in rooms not normally open to the public.



Joust event at Kenilworth Castle

Experience an event

Our acclaimed historical events are one of the most powerful ways for visitors to discover what really went on centuries ago. Make the most of our group discounts and experience the thrills, spills and colour of bygone times at events across the country.

This year's line up includes:

Legendary Joust

Kenilworth Castle and
Elizabethan Garden, Warwickshire
Sat 20 – Sun 21 July

Pendennis Castle, Cornwall
Tue 30 July – Thu 1 August

Scarborough Castle, North
Yorkshire
Tue 6 – Thu 8 August

Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight
Tue 13 – Thu 15 August

Dover Castle, Kent
Sat 24 – Mon 26 August

A Knight's Tournament

Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens,
Northumberland
Sat 27 – Sun 28 July

Tynemouth Priory,
Northumberland
Sat 10 – Sun 11 August

Clash of the Romans

Chesters Roman Fort,
Hadrian's Wall
Sat 10 – Sun 11 August

All the Queen's Horses

Osborne, Isle of Wight
Tue 20 – Thu 22 August

Re-enactment of the Battle of Hastings

Battle of Hastings, Abbey
and Battlefield, East Sussex
Sat 12 – Sun 13 October

Illuminated Abbey

Whitby Abbey, North Yorkshire
Tue 24 October – Sat 2 November

Battle Abbey, East Sussex
Thu 5 – Sun 8 December

For more event details and dates, click through to your chosen site on our website and then book your visit in the usual way (details on right).

Easier access at Kenilworth Castle and Elizabethan Garden

We're nearly ready to start our project to make it easier to get around Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire.

New paths over some of the grassy areas and new ramps will provide better access for wheelchair users.

We'll also improve the surface on existing pathways and create new routes inside and outside the castle walls.

We hope these changes will make it easier for all our visitors to explore the site and exhibitions.

The team will be making the finishing touches in May.

Inspired to book? Find out how

For more information and booking details for the properties featured in this issue of Attractions, please visit:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/traveltrade

Click through to Planning Resources to download our Group Visits Guide 2022-24 and Trade Admission Prices and Site Opening Times booklet.

We give a generous 15% discount (10% at Stonehenge) for groups of 11 or more at all our historic sites.

One tour leader and one coach driver are admitted free with each group (and do not count towards group numbers).

Advance booking no less than 7 days ahead is required for all group visits.

Contact us

English Heritage Travel Trade Department, The Engine House, Room 1/20, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EH

+44 (0)117 975 1349 traveltrade@english-heritage.org.uk